

VZCZCXYZ0000
PP RUEHWEB

DE RUEHDG #0668/01 0822018
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 232018Z MAR 07
FM AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7769
INFO RUEHZA/WHA CENTRAL AMERICAN COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHBO/AMEMBASSY BOGOTA PRIORITY 1644
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS PRIORITY 0745
RUEHPU/AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE PRIORITY 4530
RUEHSP/AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN PRIORITY 1780
RUEHUNV/USMISSION UNVIE VIENNA PRIORITY 0019
RUEAWJA/DEPT OF JUSTICE WASHDC PRIORITY
RUCOWCV/CUSTOMS CARIBBEAN ATTACHE MIAMI FL PRIORITY
RHMCSUU/FBI WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUEAHLH/HOMELAND SECURITY CENTER WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUEFHLC/HQS DHS WASHDC PRIORITY
RUMISTA/CDR USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL PRIORITY
RHEHOND/DIR ONDCP WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY

UNCLAS SANTO DOMINGO 000668

SIPDIS

SIPDIS
SENSITIVE

DEPARTMENT OF STATE FOR WHA DAS DUDDY, WHA/CAR NICHOLS AND
SEARBY, INL/LP AARIAS; DEPT PASS DEA FOR APLACIDO; PASS
ONDCP FOR PATRICK WARD; SOUTHCOM FOR JIATF SOUTH, ALSO FOR
POLAD

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PREL](#) [SNAR](#) [KCRM](#) [CO](#) [HA](#) [VE](#) [TD](#) [DR](#)
SUBJECT: FURTHER ON REGIONAL DRUGS SUMMIT AND CALLS FOR
INCREASED U.S. SUPPORT IN CARIBBEAN

REF: A. SANTO DOMINGO 0355

[1](#)B. SANTO DOMINGO 0597

[1](#)1. (U) Following is an amplified version of Santo Domingo 597
with addition of U.S. and Dominican positions, new text in
paras. 10 and 11, and comment.

[1](#)2. (U) Summary. On March 16, OAS Secretary General Insulza,
President Preval of Haiti, President Uribe of Colombia, and
Prime Minister Manning of Trinidad and Tobago joined
Dominican President Fernandez to sign a non-binding
declaration on measures to counter threats posed by the
trafficking of drugs through the Caribbean corridor. Though
the declaration carefully avoided specific reference to the
United States, Preval and Manning used the summit to
criticize the United States bluntly for a perceived reduction
of aid in the fight against narcotrafficking. Fernandez,
too, noted a perceived reduction in aid, while President
Uribe stood out as strong supporter of U.S. efforts in the
region and a critic of European resistance to aerial
spraying. Representatives from the United Nations, the
Organization of American States, the European Union
(Germany), Venezuela, Spain, France, the Netherlands, and the
United States were invited attendees. End Summary.

Summit Declaration

-- Academics criticize the United States

[1](#)3. (SBU) While the declaration drafting process began on
March 13, it was underpinned by the March 12 presentations of
eight academics and experts speaking in their individual
capacities. By and large, this group proved critical of the
United States. Typically, presenters noted the United States
to be the source of demand driving the drug trade, suggested
the USG was inappropriately fixated on interdiction and

supply reduction, and claimed that the USG was reducing the amounts of counter-narcotics assistance (including funds for U.S. demand reduction) in order to fund U.S. military commitments in Afghanistan and Iraq. Particularly noteworthy for his criticism was University of Miami Professor Bruce Bagley, a recognized expert in international narcotics trafficking. Bagley has been examining the Colombia-Dominican Republic drug nexus since at least 1998.

-- Declaration drafts

¶4. (SBU) The Haitian technical delegation headed by National Security Minister Martin Joseph submitted a moderately worded draft the morning of the 13th, which was set aside. The subsequently submitted Dominican draft declaration (Spanish-language text only) was examined by drafters. Participating vigorously in the drafting process were representatives from the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Venezuela, Columbia, the United States, and the OAS Inter-American Drug Control Commission (CICAD), as well as independent expert Diana Pardo of contracted organizing entity Newlink Political Consulting and Research. Also present during negotiations were representatives from CARICOM, France, and MINUSTAH.

¶5. (SBU) The Bagley presentation influenced the initial Dominican draft, which focused on the reduction of bilateral aid to the region, as well as the issue of demand. While all delegations ultimately proved flexible in finding consensus on declaration language, the Haitian delegation was notable for its initial insistence on the inclusion of language regarding the reduction of bilateral aid. The Dominicans, in turn, were slow to come off their initial language suggesting the need for "state of the art" technology, specifically radars and wiretapping equipment. Last-minute delays were

caused by Colombia's attempt to rephrase the entire trafficking issue as a "global drug problem," given their representatives' concern that draft language targeting "trafficking" was implicitly directed at Colombia. Organizer Pardo was resistant to the inclusion of language regarding supply reduction. Notably, Venezuelan representatives were generally non-political and cooperative, with the U.S. and Venezuelan delegations mutually reinforcing many of each others' points. (Note: This cooperation is encouraging for future regional events -- even though the Venezuelan delegation spoke privately of a hoped-for future regional drugs summit involving President Chavez.) Interestingly, Venezuelan negotiators acknowledged the transit of narcotics aircraft through their airspace, but attributed this to Venezuela's lack of technical means (i.e., radar) and pledged future improvement.

Summit Speeches

-- United States

¶6. (U) In his speech WHA/DAS Patrick Duddy touched delicately on Venezuela's place in the trafficking chain with a reference to traffickers' "use of small airplanes from the northern coast of South America," information that had been shared "with the governments of Venezuela, Haiti, and the Dominican Republic." The majority of Duddy's remarks, however, dealt with an analysis of the regional drug trade, as well as U.S. efforts to disrupt supply and to reduce demand.

¶7. (U) Duddy characterized the issue of narcotics as an "intertwined problem of demand...and supply" and noted both the stabilization of U.S. demand and the expansion of European markets. As evidence of U.S. efforts to counter domestic demand, Duddy relayed statistics of a 23 percent decline of U.S. teen drug use since 2001, a figure closely approaching President Bush's goal of a 25 percent reduction of youth drug use by 2006. As suggested by ONDCP Director John Walters and referenced by Duddy, teen drug use is a

important marker -- it often predicts adult drug use.

¶8. (U) In terms of movement of drugs through the region, Duddy noted a probable direct correlation between the success of Colombian and Jamaican interdiction and enforcement operations, on one hand, and the increased amount of drugs transiting Hispaniola, on the other. This suggested for Duddy that "the only viable recourse is to tighten even further the cooperation and coordination between our governments and law enforcement institutions, both bilaterally and through multilateral organizations." Speaking of Operation Rum Punch (REF A), though giving it that name, Duddy noted the participation of multiple U.S. agencies in the interdiction of drug flights to Hispaniola. He further mentioned contributions to Haitian police training and Coast Guard reform estimated at USD 40 million since 2004, as well as contributions to MINUSTAH UNPOL. Speaking of U.S. assistance to the Dominican Republic, Duddy declared support for Fernandez' police reform initiative to be "the single most important element of U.S. aid to law enforcement" in the Republic.

¶9. (U) Duddy raised the issue of supply and cultivation in regard to successes achieved by intensive aerial spraying under Plan Colombia, which Duddy called "an increasingly effective tool when coupled with increased economic development, expansion of the rule of law, and effective actions against narco-terrorist groups."

-- Venezuela

¶10. (SBU) The public remarks of Venezuelan Drug Czar Nestor Luis Reverol Torres reprised the non-confrontational approach taken by the Venezuelan technical delegation. Using a PowerPoint presentation, Reverol stressed expected future improvements in Venezuelan interdiction, largely through the introduction of new coastal radar systems, special maritime interdiction units, and interceptor aircraft, while stressing existing efforts to screen cargo at Venezuelan ports. He did not once mention the United States.

-- Prime Minister Manning

¶11. (U) Manning took rather the opposite tact in his remarks, pointedly criticizing the United States directly for "abandoning the eastern Caribbean." He declared Trinidad and Tobago to be in particular need of external funds, as it is "willing but unable to patrol its territory," given a poor financial situation caused by a "loss of preferential market access and changing patterns in trade." Calling himself a "voice in the wilderness," he said that U.S. policy in the region does not support U.S. rhetoric that the eastern Caribbean is the "third frontier" in the fight against narcotics. In specific support of this contention he cited the recent trip of President Bush to Latin America -- and said "the fact that the President did not visit a single Caribbean country forces us to pose the issue of how we are seen." Manning also noted the country's supply of significant amounts of liquefied natural gas, ammonia, and methanol to the United States, with little U.S. reciprocity in terms either of attention or of funds.

-- President Preval

¶12. (U) Preval began his remarks by quoting from sections of the latest USG report on narcotics (INSCR) regarding Haiti, to the effect that "Haiti is a privileged land for traffickers" and a "weak state." This led to a plea to the Haitian people for peace, as "political violence breeds impunity." Unlike Manning, Preval continued by stressing the regional responsibility for increased cooperation and the need for governments to improve education systems, youth prevention programs, and opportunities for civic participation.

¶13. (U) Preval highlighted his suggestion of a greater role for the United States as a "larger consumer country." Preval insisted that the United States must mobilize additional

resources to attack demand (termed as "consumer networks") within its own territory. He further called on the World Bank, Inter-American Development Bank, the European Union, and the United States for increased direct assistance, and he asked U.S. religious communities and human rights organizations to motivate the U.S. government toward action. His final call was for all to "work together without hypocrisy" and "without accusing each other."

-- President Uribe

14 (U) Speaking forcefully and extemporaneously for roughly thirty minutes, Uribe repeatedly expressed Colombia's "will to beat illicit drugs in all their dimensions." He spoke at length and favorably regarding aerial spraying, noting "what is dangerous is not the scientific protocol of spraying itself, but rather the exploitation of the jungle to plant drugs (illicit crops) and the chemical precursors used in processing."

¶15. (U) In speaking on spraying, Uribe referenced U.S. assistance, asked CICAD for additional studies to demonstrate the safety of spraying, confirmed that the Colombian people were not against the practice, and challenged the European Union to fund manual eradication, should they not be able to overcome their objections to aerial application of

herbicides. He further challenged citizens of "sister nations" to come forward with claims regarding extra-territorial spraying, stating that "our decision is to eradicate drugs, not to have arguments with our neighbors."

¶16. (U) Uribe's remarks strongly backed Plan Colombia and suggested that alternative development, while useful, is not a prerequisite for eradication operations, as "drugs cause a displacement of Colombians abroad that impoverishes the nation." A first step must be the "democratic application of force" (alternately described as authority or coercion) which he finds "necessary to get the people accustomed to drug trafficking to stop."

¶17. (U) Part of this democratic application appears to be the air bridge denial program, which he commended and suggested be expanded throughout the region. Another part would be the criminalization of narcotics possession, which he intends to submit to the Colombian legislature as a proposed constitutional reform. A further component is the frequent use of the extradition process, which he asserts the Colombian people do not reject (as opposed to drug traffickers whom he directly calls "terrorists.")

¶18. (U) For Uribe, the best application of force is coordinated. Accordingly, he calls on the United States to coordinate interdiction activities with both Colombia and Venezuela and calls on the OAS to help prepare an inter-American convention dealing with interdiction.

¶19. (U) Again reiterating Colombia's commitment to eradicate narcotics trafficking, Uribe concluded with an outright rejection of legalization, using an ecological argument ("Who can guarantee that they won't cut down the entire Amazon jungle?"), before promising to share whatever Colombian resources possible with the region in the fight against drugs.

¶20. (U) Uribe's remarks brought a partial standing ovation and were so well received that both Manning and Fernandez rose from their seats to shake Uribe's hand.

-- President Fernandez

¶21. (U) Fernandez' remarks were made at the beginning of the Summit. Though brief and introductory, they effectively "split the baby" by noting U.S. commitment to the counternarcotics fight since the early 1980s, but also faulting the United States for a reduction in resources dedicated following the attacks of September 11. This reduction, as detailed by Bagley, alarms Fernandez; Fernandez

sees that there has been a significant increase in both narcotics use and narcotics-related crimes in the region during the last five years. His solution, proposed in brief remarks at the close of the session, was for increased regional cooperation and coordination and for the international community to make aircraft, ships, radars, and other assets available to Caribbean nations through mid- to long-term lease or purchase arrangements.

Comment

¶22. (SBU) The general demands of Caribbean governments for increased external support in the war against drugs, were not new, but they appeared to increase in pitch paralleling the increase in criminality in the region. This summit was clearly born out of that demand and, likewise, from the desire to cast domestic failings as the responsibility of outside entities. The demand for external support does not take into account a critical "ground truth" - the United States already provides significant amounts of assistance to the region on a continuing basis. But for the presentations

made by Colombia and the United States, the ultimate message of this summit could well have been an incorrect one -- that the lack of U.S. interest and support permits the growth of narcotics trafficking and crime. The summit spin reminds us that just providing the technical and financial assistance to the region is not enough. Public diplomacy must accompany it. The United States must make frequent and public reassurances of commitment to the region, an important part of which will necessarily involve high-level participation in regional summits, as well as visits by prominent persons when possible.

¶23. (U) The final text of the official summit declaration in English, Spanish, and French has been transmitted electronically to WHA/CAR.

¶24. (U) Drafted by Michael Garuckis.
HERTELL